

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the abstract as follows:

The present invention relates to apparatus and methods for facilitating removal of obstructions from a surgical cutting instrument[[s]] during a surgical procedure. The apparatus of the present invention is configured to interrupt flow in aspiration tubing when obstructions are detected in the cutting instrument. The apparatus then causes compression of the aspiration tubing to flush fluid towards the cutting instrument, thereby unclogging the instrument in a fast and efficient manner without the need to remove the instrument from the surgical site.